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# MODEL SRO

Single Room Occupancy Housing

**KAMINSKY  
& SHIFFER  
ARCHITECTS AIA**

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# MODEL SRO

Single Room Occupancy Housing

Prepared for the Borough President of Manhattan, Hon. Percy E. Sutton,  
and Community Planning Board No. 7, Henry R. Marquit, Chairman

March, 1970

**KAMINSKY  
& SHIFFER  
ARCHITECTS AIA**

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## SUMMARY

The single room occupancy (SRO) housing situation in New York City is an extremely difficult one both for the residents of the housing and their surrounding community. Many experimental programs are being conducted in existing SRO buildings to find a way toward improvement. As a part of this effort, Kaminsky & Shiffer, Architects, were commissioned by the Hon. Percy E. Sutton, Borough President of Manhattan, by Community Planning Board No. 7, Henry R. Marquit, Chairman, and by Assemblyman Jerome Kretchmer to develop a prototype or "Model SRO" designed specifically for the residents in SRO housing. In addition, Kaminsky & Shiffer, Architects, was asked to forecast the costs of this housing, to identify funding sources and to point out a direction toward implementation. The focus of the report is on the upper West Side of Manhattan, centering around the West 80's, but the report is applicable to all sections of the city in which the SRO housing problem exists. It is the intention of this report to be but the first step in the construction of an actual pilot housing project and further, in the formulation of a City, State and Federal policy aimed toward construction of large amounts of badly needed SRO housing.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their thanks to the SRO residents, Manhattan Borough President Hon. Percy E. Sutton, Community Planning Board No. 7, Chairman Henry R. Marquit, Assemblyman Jerome Kretchmer, Assemblyman Albert Blumenthal, Deputy Borough President Leonard N. Cohen, Joseph Mercurio, Assistant to the Borough President, Members of Planning Board No. 7, John Kowal, Chairman of the Planetarium Council, Members of the Planetarium Council, Arthur Kortheuer, former President of the West 80th Street Area Association and all the others mentioned in the Appendix who contributed to this report.





## 1. THE CLIENT - THE SRO RESIDENT

Only a portion of the total SRO population, the "problem SRO" resident, is a subject of this study. The rest of the SRO population, the majority of people living in single rooms, have an adequate living standard and no more than the normal problems of life. However, the occupants of the "problem SRO's" are different and are waging a daily battle to maintain their dignity and independence against the forces of poverty, physical and mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, loneliness and old age. The age range of these occupants is from the infants of families ineligible for or unable to find public housing to very old people striving to stay out of a nursing home. They pose a problem to themselves and to the communities in which they live. They need more money, decent housing and better access to health and social services provided by public and private agencies.

As clients for housing, the SRO resident has certain specific needs and desires. These are enumerated below and were developed in visits to existing SRO's, conferences with the SRO residents and other community residents, discussions with professional workers in SRO's and government officials, and from the available written material.

The needs and desires related to housing are as follows:

Security - physical and emotional

Dignity - a setting for a clean and decent life

Independence and Privacy - as much as is feasible, considering the condition of the individual

Community - within and without the SRO

Access to Services - welfare  
health, mental and physical  
recreation  
vocational - in some situations

It is these needs and desires, together with the limitations of economics, which inspired the designs described in the next section.



## 2. ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTIONS

Three architectural solutions are presented. One is a totally new building and two are remodeled buildings. One of the remodeled buildings is a new law tenement and the other consists of six brownstones joined together. Other building types available which may be considered for a Model SRO are old law tenements, hotels, elevator apartment buildings and residence halls.

### The Single Room

The starting point of all the solutions is the single room. A typical complete single room unit contains a bathroom, a kitchenette and living area of 150 sq. ft. which conforms to the multiple dwelling law. In some cases, two rooms share a bathroom and in the remodeled buildings, four or five rooms share a large kitchen.

The SRO resident wants and needs the dignity, security and privacy of his own living unit. Bathrooms and kitchens, when shared on an indiscriminate basis, as they are in existing SRO's, deteriorate to the level of the most careless and unsanitary person using them. Thus, the majority of people, who wish to have clean facilities, are deprived of them unless the use is on a private or controlled basis.

This also allows the purchase and preparation of food at home, rather than eating in restaurants, which is a considerable cost saving to the tightly budgeted SRO tenant.

The ability to stay within the single room or locked suite while using bathroom or kitchen, is a security advantage, especially to the old or sick who are frequently mugged in the public corridor or whose rooms are entered as they leave them.

The space needs of a single person are modest. Residents feel more comfortable if large groups gather in public spaces. However, space for reading, eating, entertaining two or three others, watching television as well as sleeping and dressing space is needed and provided. In addition, a modest amount of drawer and hanging space is included, together with the necessary furnishings.

A telephone in each room allows communication with the desk and other tenants without leaving the security of the room. In case someone is unable to leave the room, due to an attack of illness, he can get help. A good strong lock and a peephole are also provided. As the design of the room is developed in more detail, the particular needs of the handicapped and aged will be taken into account.

### Corridor, Elevator, Lobby

The corridor, elevator and lobby, in addition to providing efficient and easy movement through the building, should be settings for encounter and socializing. Unfortunately, these spaces are, and probably will be, a setting for muggings and molestation if they are not designed correctly. Thus, the corridors



are straight in all plans, with no places to conceal the mugger from the resident leaving his room or the elevator. The elevator ideally should be equipped with closed circuit television or at least an easily activated phone or loudspeaker to enable someone to summon help.

Encounter and socializing will focus on the lounge and dining room, spaces which can lend themselves to self-supervision better than corridors, elevators and the lobby, although the lobby will serve as a feeder to the lounge and dining room.

In the lobby is the main desk, which should serve as the information and security center for the building. In the rehabilitated buildings there would have to be a vestibule and buzzer system since the income from the smaller number of rooms would not cover 24 hour desk service. There would also have to be a live-in superintendant in these buildings as a nighttime security measure.

### Common Facilities and Services

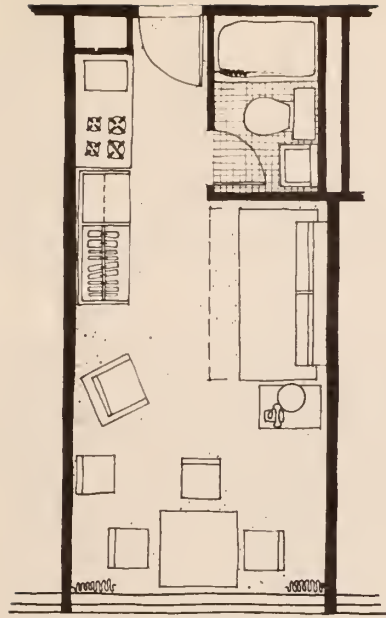
The SRO resident has needs as an individual not only for dignity, security and privacy, but also for many supportive services in the house. This need for services arises from the state of being alone, from the state of physical or mental ill health, from old age, from dependence on drugs or alcohol, or from poverty or inability to deal with the various public and private suppliers of services outside the SRO.

To fill these individual needs for services, the Model SRO provides offices for social workers, community workers, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, job counselors, welfare and training counselors and program administrators. An infirmary is included as a treatment facility for residents too sick to remain alone in their rooms, but not really sick enough to be hospitalized. The laundry is an essential function. Other services include provision of linen and furnishings as well as homemaker service for the infirm.

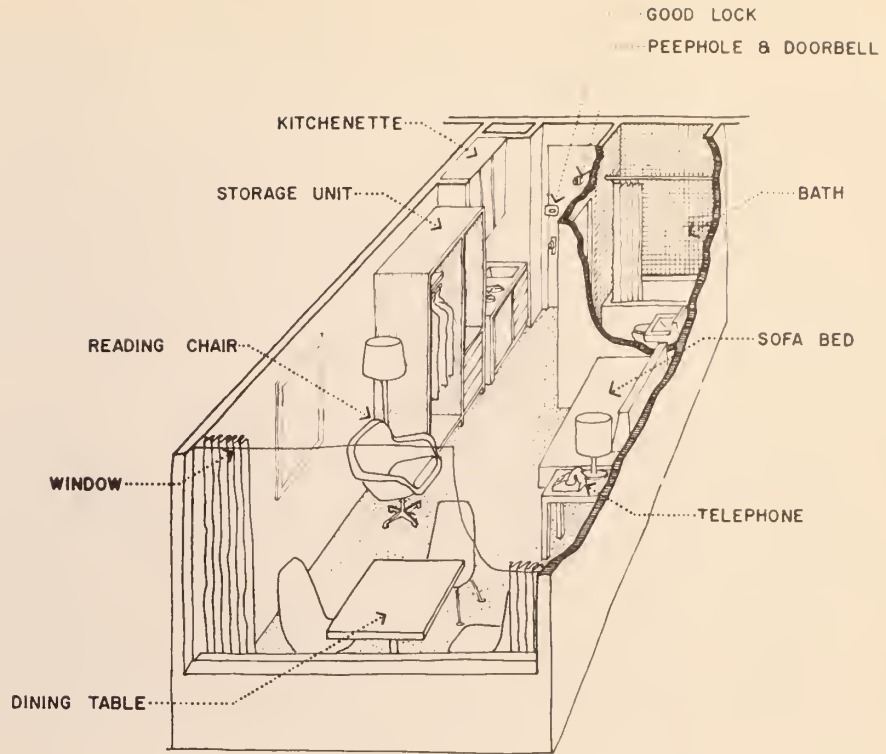
As a group, the SRO residents have other needs and desires. The state of being alone and without help has generated in the SRO residents a response to each others problems which attempts to fill the yawning gap of aloneness and poverty. Within SRO's there exists a community structure and leadership that uses the strengths of the stronger to help the weaker. A lounge for socializing and meetings will provide a setting for the SRO group.

The kitchen and dining room have several functions. One is the social function. Another is the possibility of providing one meal per day, the cost of which is added to the rent, so that those tenants who spend their money as quickly as it is received, will have some nutrition to tide them over until the next check day. Still another function of the kitchen is as a training area to provide a marketable skill for some of the residents.





**PLAN**



**CUT-AWAY VIEW**

**TYPICAL SINGLE UNIT**





## The New Building

A corner 100' x 200' lot was chosen with zoning typical of the Upper West Side and a zoning analysis made. The plans as shown conform to the Zoning Code in most particulars, as well as to the Building Code. It was felt that a building of this magnitude should provide services to the SRO population of the entire neighborhood and that these neighborhood facilities would carry some of the high land cost which the housing would not carry by itself.

The SRO service center takes up the lower three floors of the building and contains all the offices and social facilities enumerated earlier as well as training and workshop facilities and storefronts. These could be used to provide employment and training for the SRO residents. A community meeting room and recreation rooms are also included. The center is approached from a plaza for sitting and gathering.

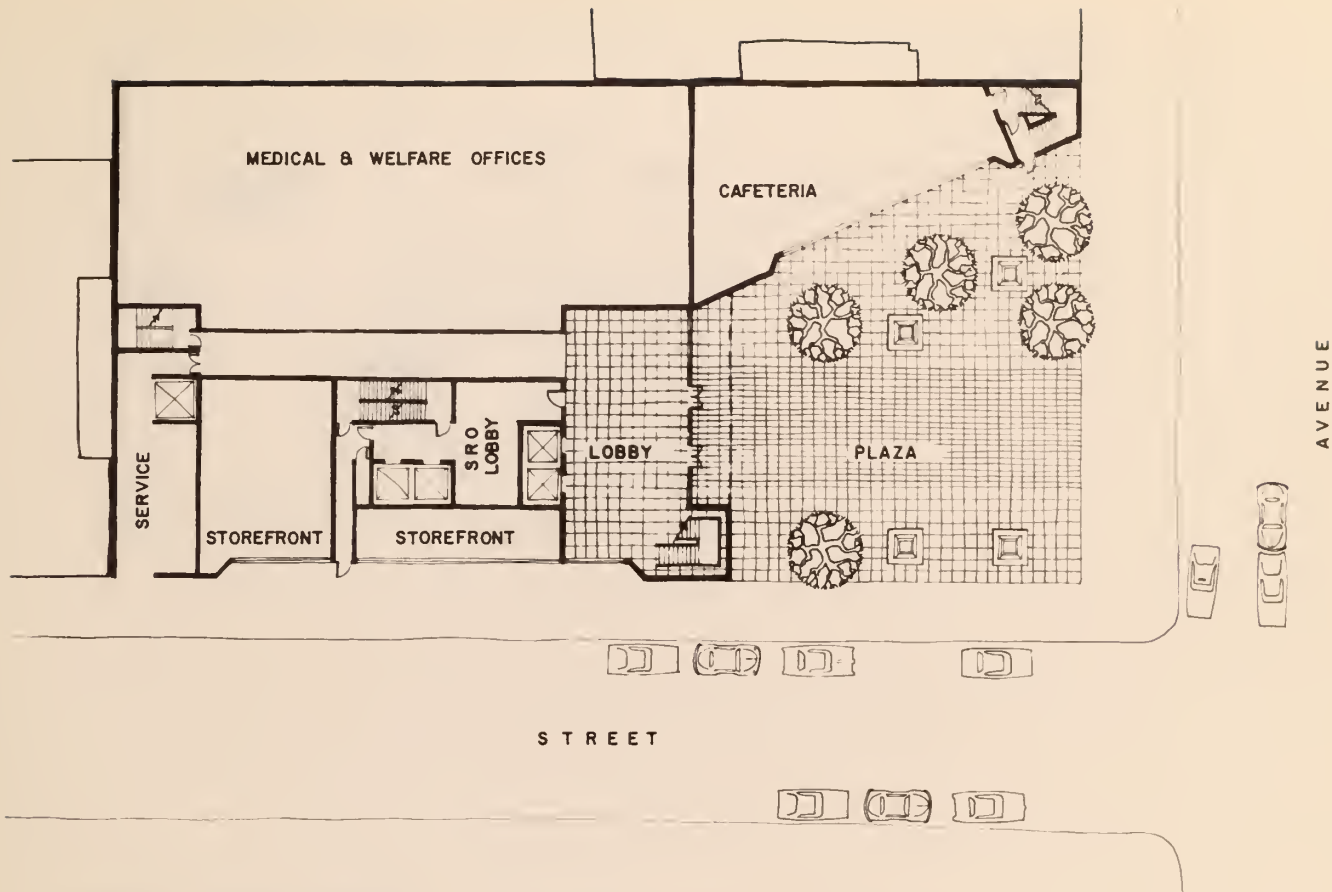
Above the service center are 16 typical floors of living units with 13 single units and 2 double units per floor; 272 units total. The top floor of the building is recreation space for the building residents.





**NEW BUILDING**

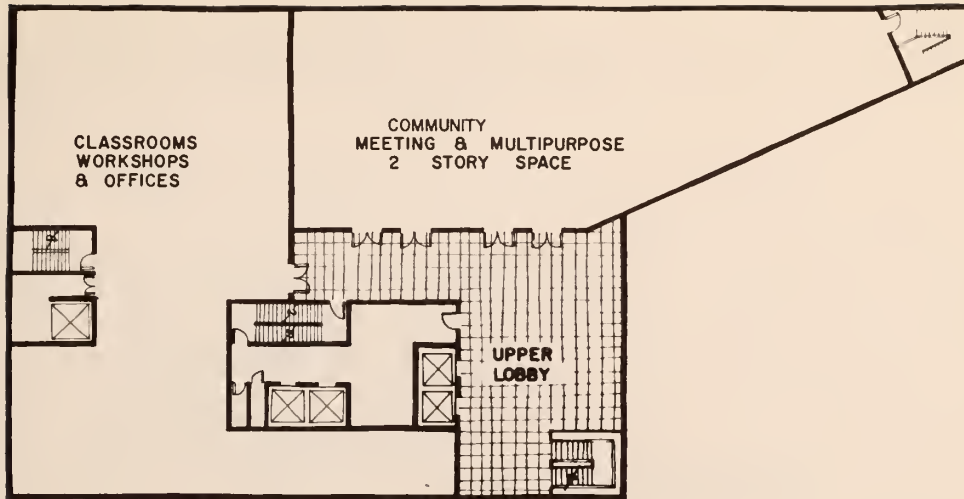




# NEW BUILDING GROUND FLOOR PLAN





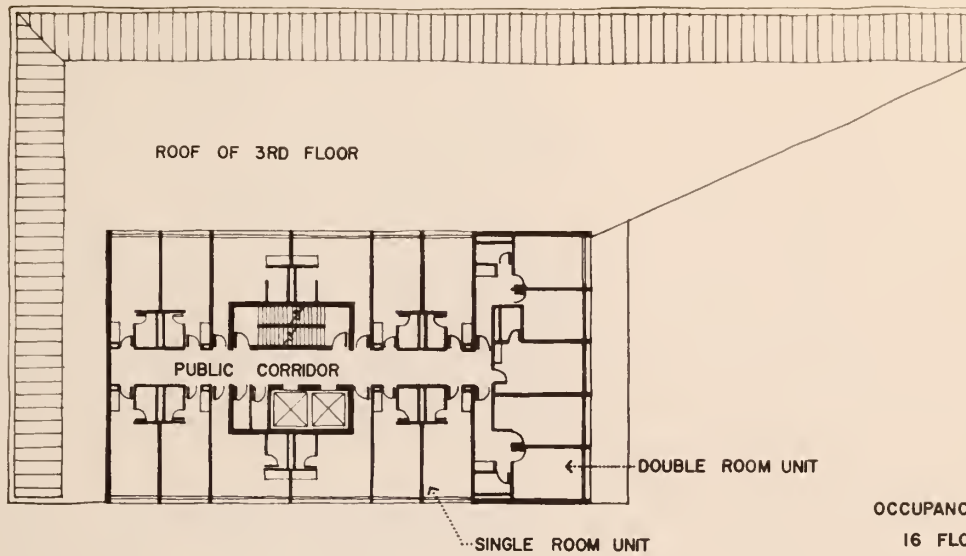


**NEW BUILDING  
2ND FLOOR PLAN (3RD FLOOR SIMILAR)**









OCCUPANCY ANALYSIS:

16 FLOORS AT 13 SINGLE UNITS  
 2 DOUBLE UNITS  
 17 OCCUPANTS PER FLOOR  
 TOTAL = 272

TOP FLOOR OF BUILDING - LOUNGE &  
 RECREATION SPACE FOR S R O TENANTS

# NEW BUILDING TYPICAL TOWER FLOOR PLAN





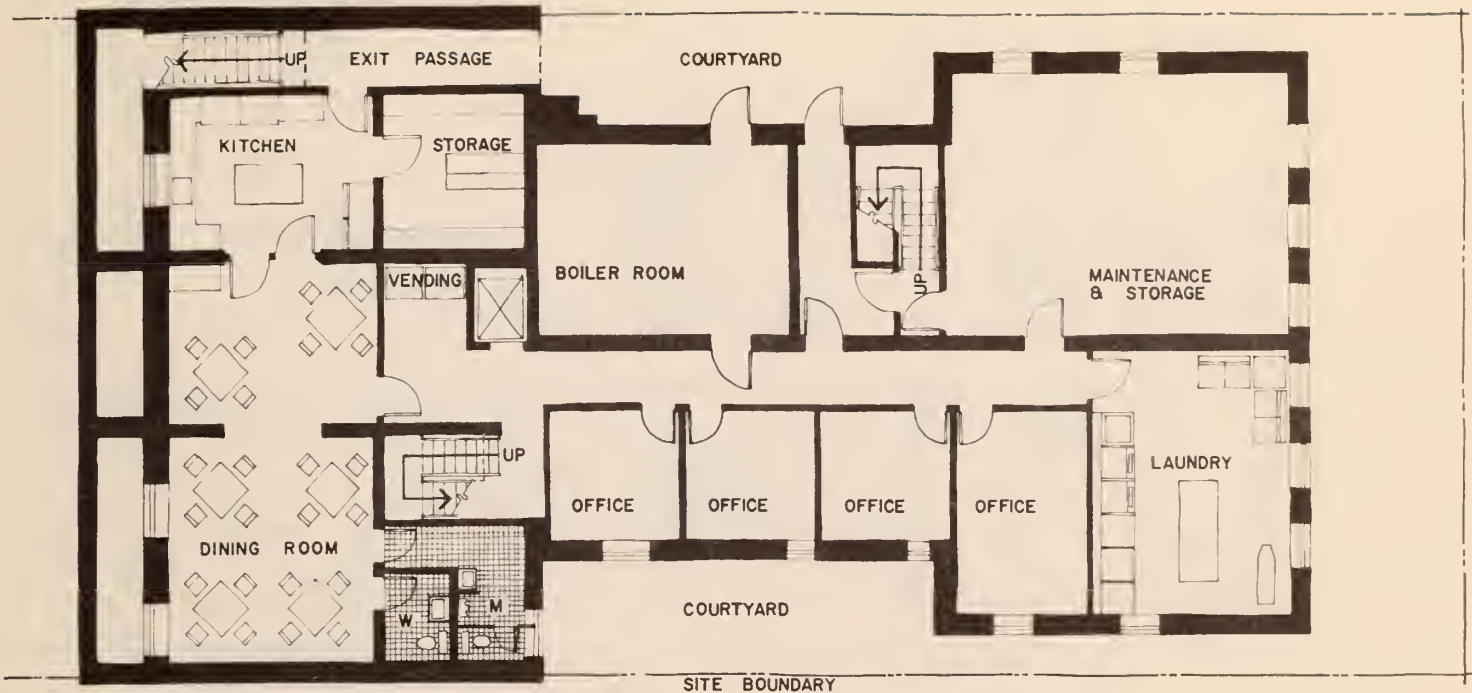
## The Remodeled New Law Tenement

Rehabilitation is a more realistic approach than a new building for a first SRO project in terms of scope and cost. A new law tenement offers a structure of six stories and a basement on a 50 x 100 foot lot. In this scheme, unlike the new building, which serves as a neighborhood SRO center, common facilities were provided to serve the building population only. The common facilities in the basement include kitchen and dining facilities as well as offices for social services and a laundry. On the first floor are located the front desk, strategically controlling the entrance, lounge space, medical office and small infirmary and eight living units.

An elevator gives access to floors 2 through 6 which are typical floors with thirteen units each. The public corridor is straight and open with no places for muggers to lurk unseen.

Five of the units are joined into a locked suite which share a large kitchen, but no more than two units share a bath. There are, in addition, two double units and four singles. Each living unit is based on the typical unit described above, but the shapes vary. A total of 73 units is provided. The plan conforms in general to the New York City Building Code.

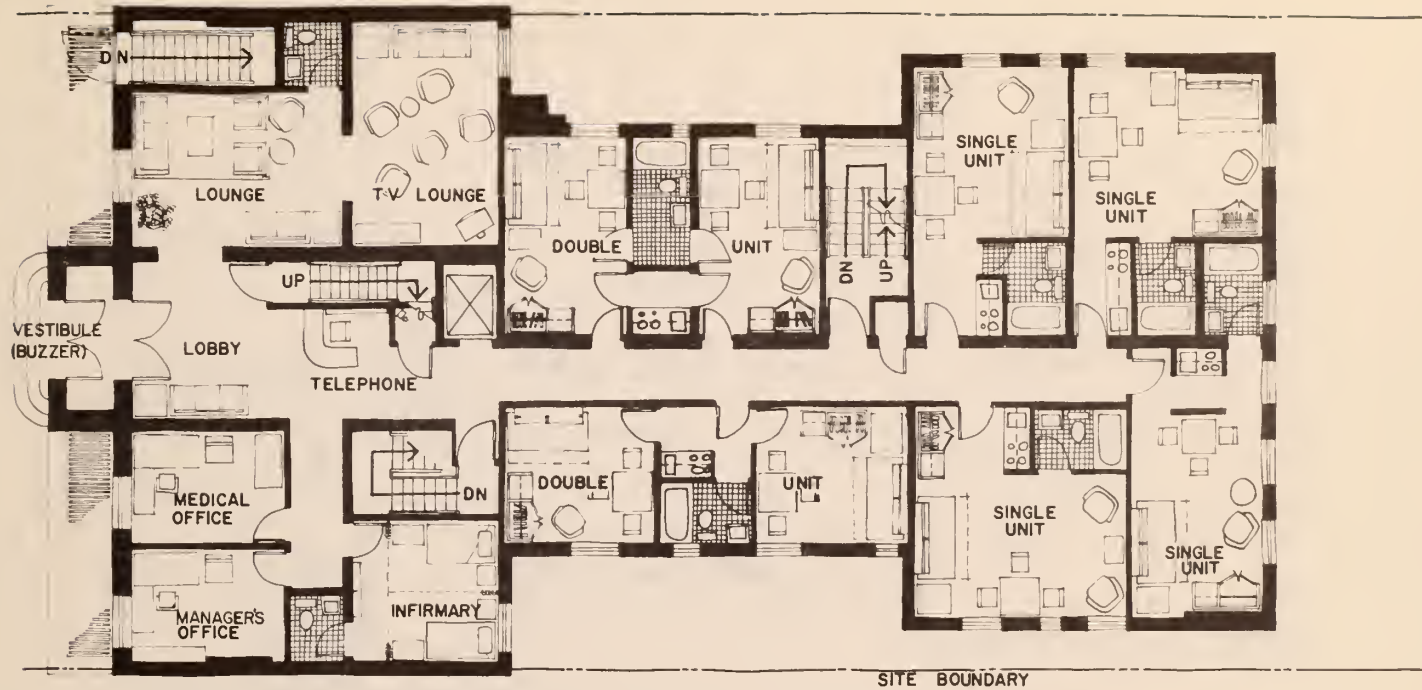




# NEW LAW TENEMENT RENOVATION BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN





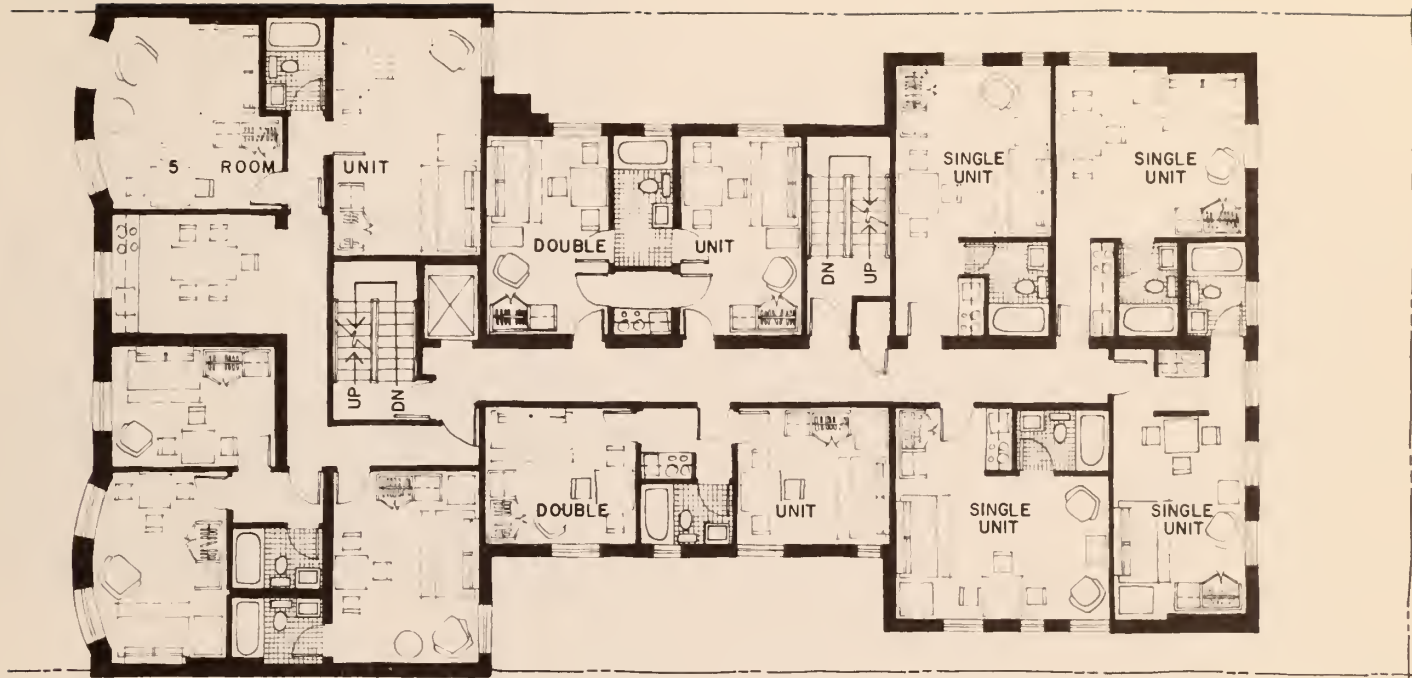


# NEW LAW TENEMENT RENOVATION 1ST FLOOR PLAN









# NEW LAW TENEMENT RENOVATION TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN



## OCCUPANCY ANALYSIS:

- 1ST FLOOR: 4 SINGLE UNITS  
2 DOUBLE UNITS
- 2ND THRU 6TH FLOORS:  
4 SINGLE UNITS  
2 DOUBLE UNITS  
1 5 ROOM UNIT
- BUILDING TOTAL = 73 OCCUPANTS

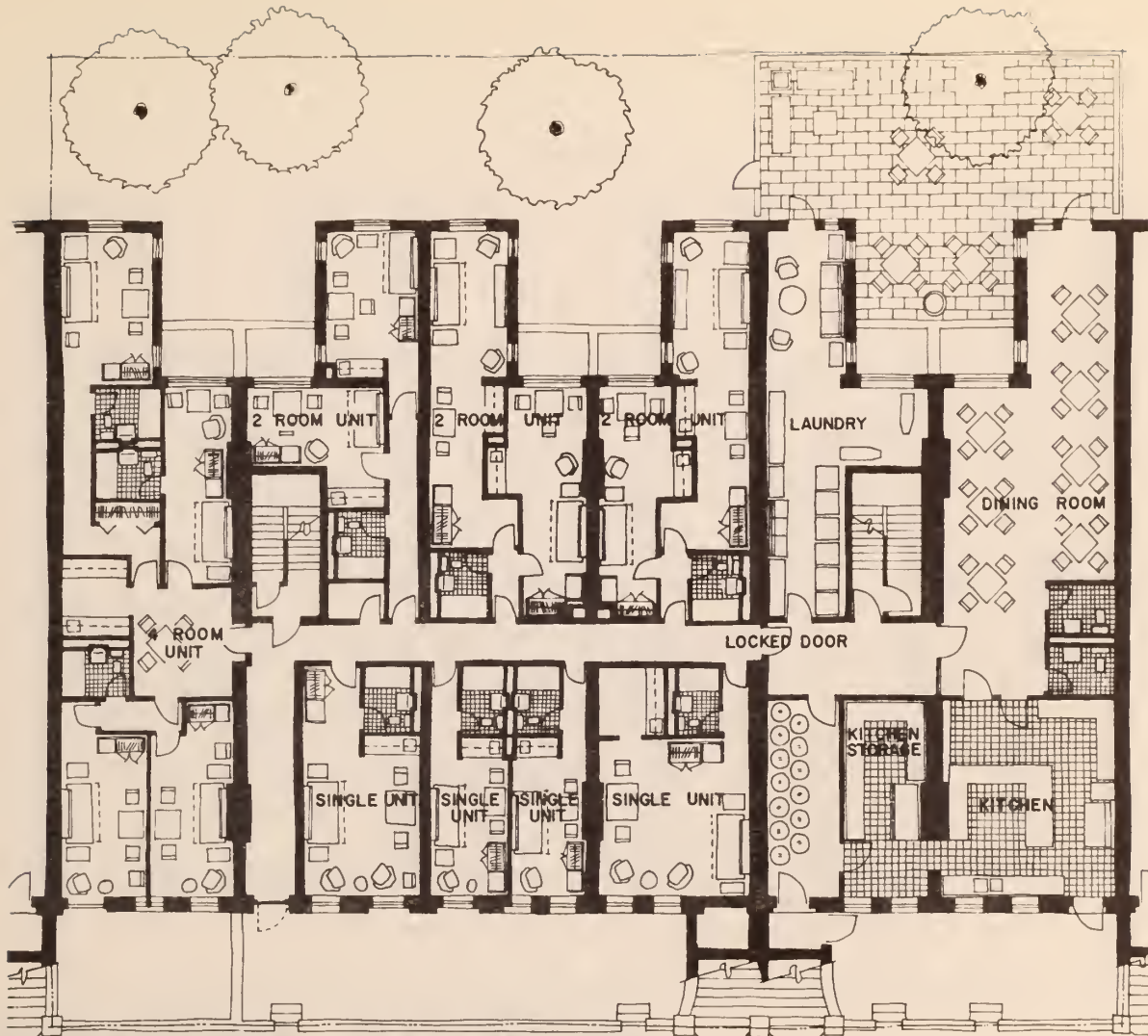


## The Remodeled Brownstone

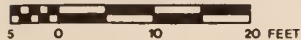
At the suggestion of an SRO resident, a scheme involving brownstones was developed. Although somewhat more expensive to purchase, the brownstone has a more pleasant character and scale than the tenement and offers yard space in back. The brownstone scheme is a walk up scheme of 4 floors and basement, using six brownstones providing 94 units. In the basement are a kitchen-dining area, laundry and fourteen living units. The dining area adjoins the yard allowing outdoor eating and other activities in good weather.

On the first floor are a lobby and desk, medical offices, infirmary, lounge, social service offices and twelve living units. The second floor contains 24 units, while the third and fourth floors contain 22 units each. Like the tenement scheme, the corridors are straight and the plan conforms to the New York City Building Code.

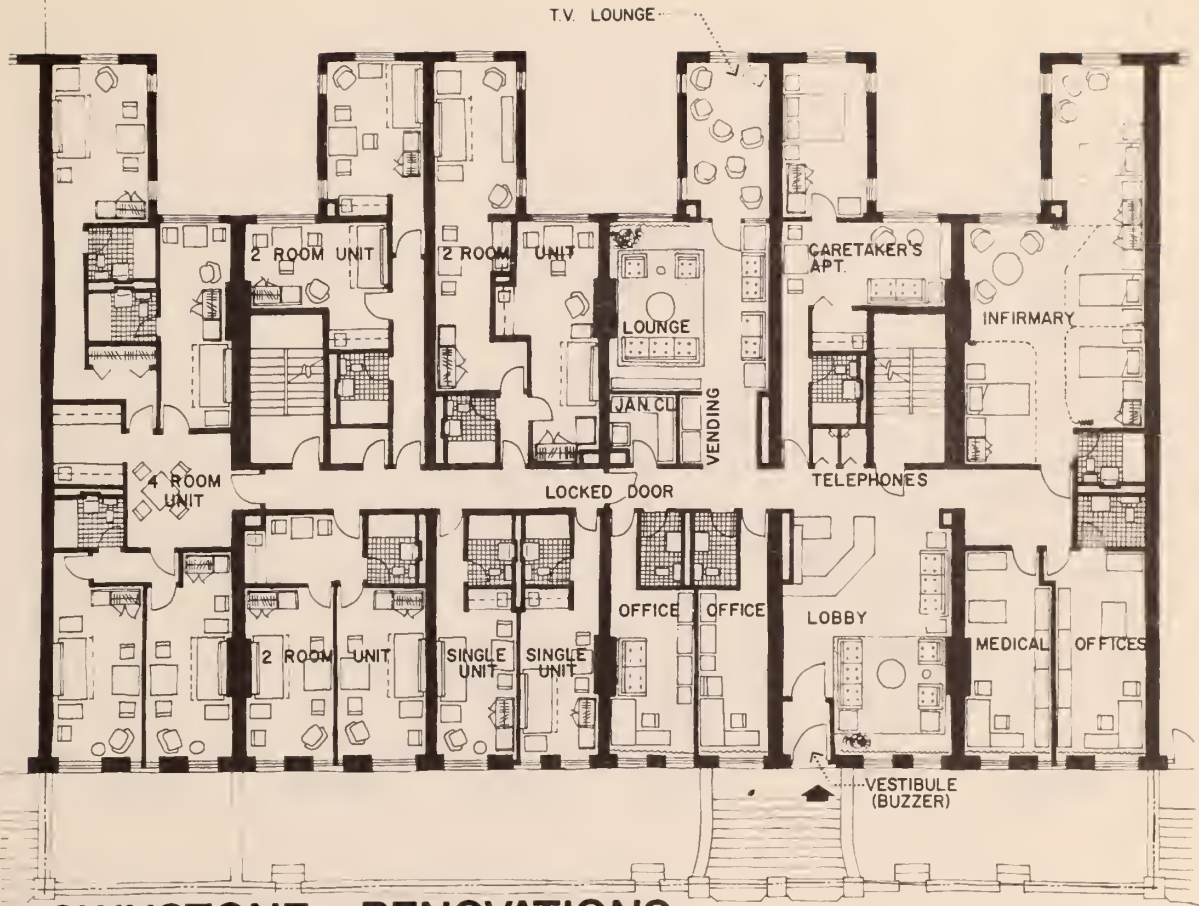




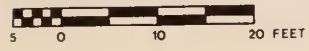
# BROWNSTONE RENOVATIONS BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN







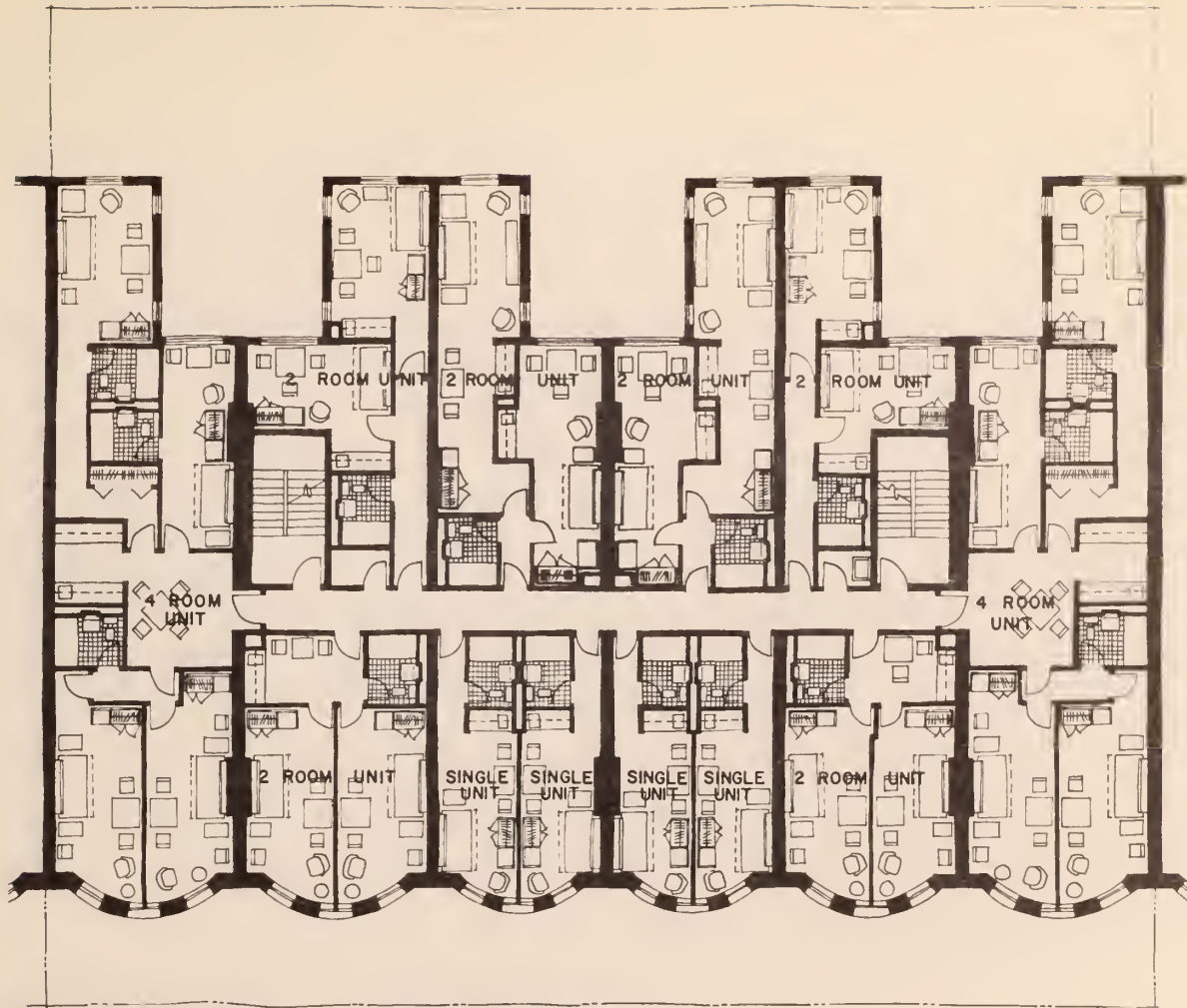
# BROWNSTONE RENOVATIONS 1ST FLOOR PLAN



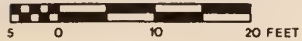




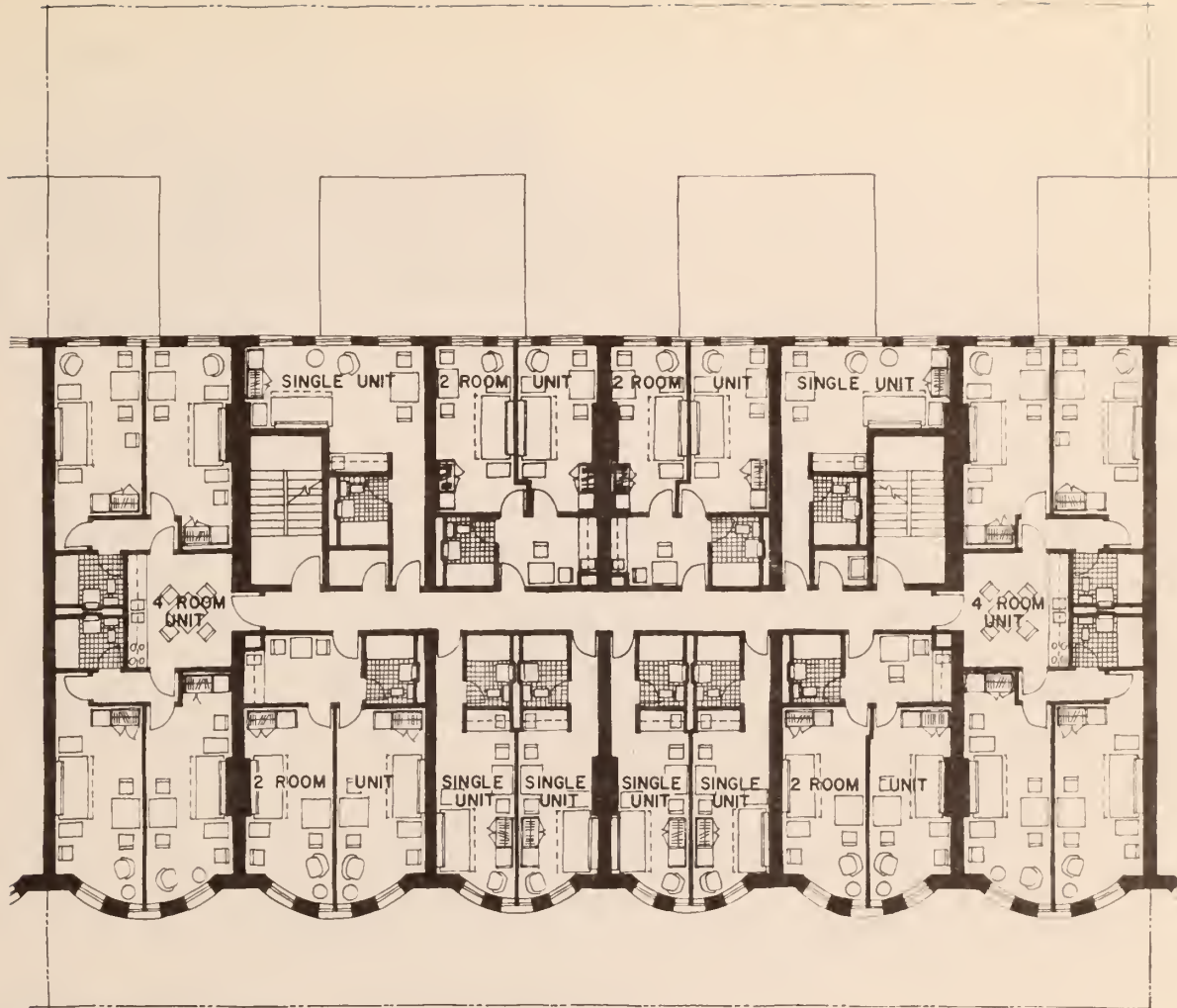




# BROWNSTONE RENOVATIONS 2ND FLOOR PLAN



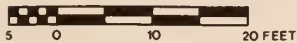




OCCUPANCY ANALYSIS:

BASEMENT	
4	SINGLE UNITS
3	2 ROOM UNITS
1	4 ROOM UNITS
1 ST FLOOR	
2	SINGLE UNITS
3	2 ROOM UNITS
1	4 ROOM UNITS
2 ND FLOOR	
4	SINGLE UNITS
6	2 ROOM UNITS
2	4 ROOM UNITS
3 RD & 4 TH FLOOR (EACH)	
6	SINGLE UNITS
4	2 ROOM UNITS
2	4 ROOM UNITS
BUILDING TOTAL = 94 OCCUPANTS	

# BROWNSTONE RENOVATIONS 3RD & 4TH FLOOR PLAN



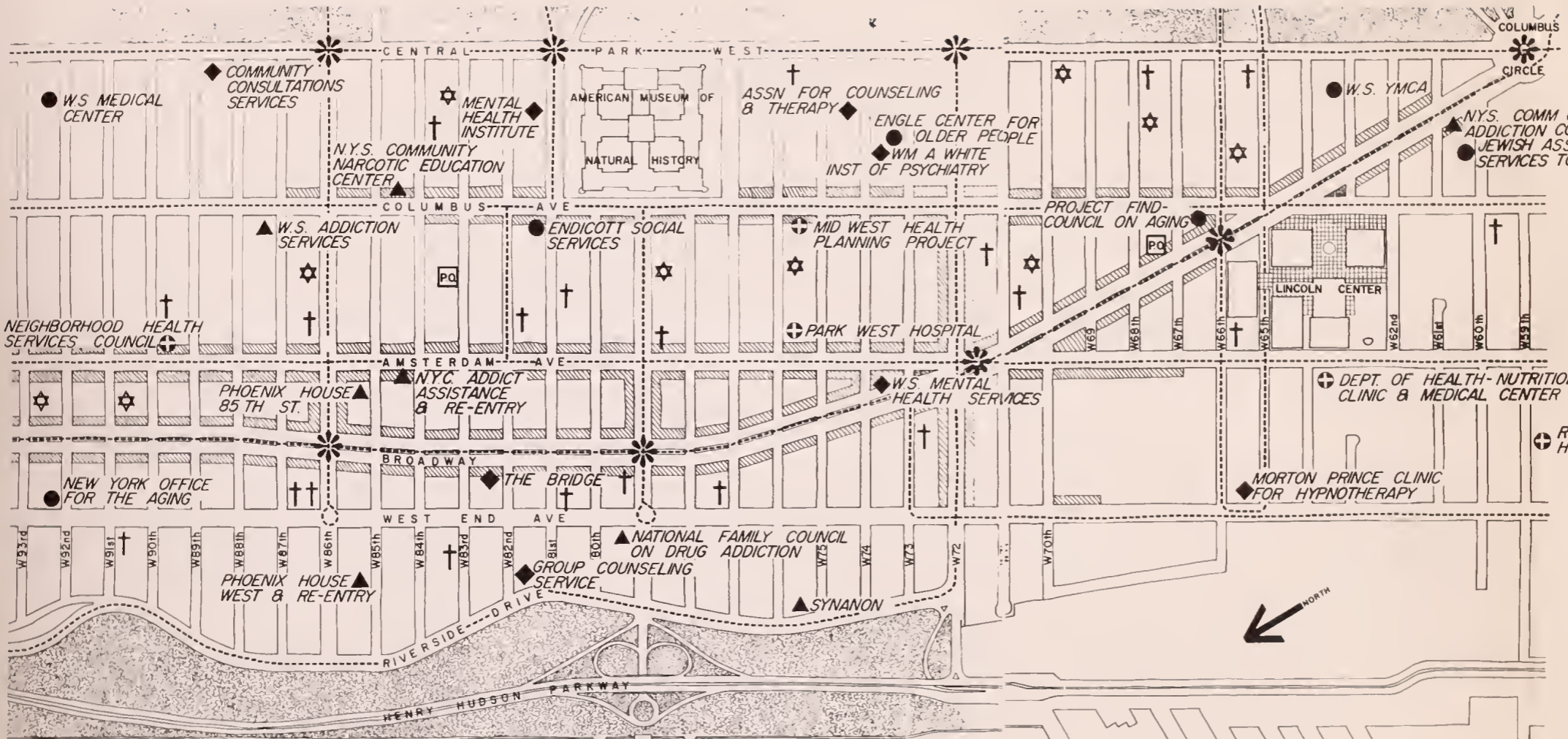


### 3. NEIGHBORHOOD FACILITIES

A map of the upper West Side area from 59th to 93rd Streets has been included showing various facilities of relevance to SRO housing. These facilities include transportation, shopping, religious buildings and various health and social services. This map will be of value in evaluating sites for SRO projects.







- LEGEND**
- ★ SUBWAY STATION
  - † CHURCH
  - ☆ SYNAGOGUE
  - PO POST OFFICE
  - ▨ PARK
  - SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY
  - ⊕ HEALTH SERVICES
  - ◆ MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
  - ▲ NARCOTICS SERVICES
  - ▨ SHOPPING
  - BUS ROUTES

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR THE SRO TENANT  
UPPER WEST SIDE OF MANHATTAN**







#### 4. RENTALS AND COSTS

In order to arrive at rental figures for the SRO units, a complete cost estimate was prepared for the new building and the tenement rehabilitation covering land, capital improvement, occupancy cost, including operating expense and debt retirement on a 40 year mortgage. The brownstone rehabilitation costs would be similar, but possibly higher than the tenement. These figures were prepared in the fall of 1969 and should be increased from that base depending on the time applied. The rental figures are as follows for a typical living unit:

New Building - 6% money - 128.00/month  
1½% money - 96.00/month

New Law Tenement Rehabilitation -  
6% money - 110.00/month  
1½% money - 83.00/month

The common facilities in the tenement would add \$26.00/month at 6% or \$20.00/month at 1½% to the monthly rent per room, if not financed by other sources. These rentals are high as calculated and would be even higher today. They are out of reach of the average resident of the "problem SRO" and simply point up the fact that the present techniques of subsidy are inadequate. In order to provide decent housing for the SRO resident, other types of subsidy, such as direct rent grants, will be required.

A cost chart is attached to show the development of the capital cost and occupancy cost on which these rentals are based. The real estate cost was computed at \$45.00 per square foot. The relocation cost was estimated. Construction costs were prepared by a contractor familiar with such work on the basis of the drawings shown and an outline specification. A sum equal to one third of this construction cost was added on to cover such starting up costs as legal fees, real estate commission, architects fees and administrative costs.

In the chart, the figures are broken down for the common facilities and for the housing units themselves. Contained in the capital cost are furnishings, equipment and linens. The occupancy cost includes operating expense and debt service. An assumption has been made of total tax abatement. The operating expense covers fuel oil, electricity, laundry, insurance, painting, maintenance, repairs, management, vacancies, vandalism and superintendent. This cost has been computed on the basis of figures provided by a public agency and by a private housing company and is 50% of the total occupancy cost, the other 50% being debt amortization and 6% interest. A second set of rents was calculated if Section 236 interest subsidy was available to reduce the interest to 1½%.







COST CHART

Rehabilitated New Law Tenement - Housing and Common Facilities for Residents

Floor	Common Facilities Gross Area, sq. ft.	Living Units, Corridors, Stairs Elevators Gross Area, sq. ft.	Number of Living Units
Basement	3,000	0	0
First Floor	1,600	2,070	8
Second through Sixth	0	3,870 x 5 = 19,350	13 x 5 = 65
Totals	4,600 (18%)	21,420 (82%)	73

26,020 sq. ft. total gross area excluding mechanical and maintenance space in basement.

<u>Capital Cost</u>	<u>Common Facilities</u>	<u>73 Units</u>	<u>Total</u>
Floor Area %	18%	82%	100%
Real Estate Purchase (Upper West Side at 45.00/sf x 5,000 sf)	40,500	184,500	225,000
Relocation (Estimate)	4,500	20,500	25,000
Development Cost - Development Phase 25% Construction Phase 75%	25,700 77,400	117,300 352,600	143,000 430,000
Furnishings and Equipment	25,000	(800/room) 58,000	83,000
Totals	173,100	732,900	906,000
Per Living Unit	2,370	10,040	12,410

Occupancy Cost Per Year

Operating Expense Per Year	11,440	48,400	59,840
Debt Service Per Year @ 1½%	5,760	24,360	30,120
Debt Service Per Year @ 6%	11,440	48,400	59,840



## 5. FUNDING

The funding picture for SRO housing is complex and unpromising. Present housing laws are directed toward families, the aged and the disabled. Even if not specifically written this way, the laws are interpreted in these directions by the executing agencies. Changes in interpretation and changes in the laws themselves will be necessary before a full attack on the SRO housing problem can be mounted, but as a later section in this report will indicate, there is a path toward the "Model SRO," and the relevant funding tools are described in this section.

Funds are required for "seed money" - initial organization and planning, for real estate acquisition, for construction, for food, social and health programs, and for rent subsidy. A funding chart explains the relationship of the various programs at private, city, state and federal levels to the different categories of funds required. One vital conclusion from this chart is that a successful SRO project will demand the coordinated efforts of many government agencies as well as private institutions. To bring about this coordination, vigorous leadership is essential, either from a community group or from one of the institutions or agencies concerned.

In addition, in many of these programs, funds are not available due to current money market conditions or lack of appropriations. Since this picture changes so rapidly, it would be of little value to note current conditions.

Any sponsor seeking funds must check this point with the funding agency at the time he begins his project.





FUNDING CHART

Item	Private	New York City	New York State	Federal
Seed Money	Foundations	Capital Budget Housing Authority Project	Private Housing Finance Law, Art. II	
Real Estate	Foundations	Capital Budget Housing Authority Project	Private Housing Finance Law, Art. II (option money)	
Construction	Lending Institution	Municipal Loan Housing Authority Project Private Housing Finance Law	Mental Hygiene Law Private Housing Finance Law	
Food, Social and Health Programs	Local Hospitals Foundations Service Organi- zations	Department of Social Services		
Rent Subsidy		Housing Authority Project	Capital Grant Low Rent Assistance Program	236 Rent Supplement Skewed Rental Program



Following is a discussion of the programs noted in the chart related to seed money, real estate construction financing and rent subsidy, with emphasis on their relevance to the "problem SPO" population. A fuller summary of the programs is contained in "Housing Programs in New York State and City," Community Service Society of New York, 105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York 10010, February, 1969. All of these programs have maximum income limitations which have little applicability to the SRO problem. Coverage of this aspect of the programs is not included, but may be found in the publication referred to above. The question of social and health programs such as they exist now is covered in the New School - Planning Board #7 Report.

#### Private Funding

The charitable organizations of the various religious groups such as JASA, Catholic Charities, Protestant Charities, should be approached for funding in two areas, seed money and in operating the social and health programs. Private landlords such as Stephen A. Vali, of the Admiral Hotel on West 80th Street, would be able to sponsor themselves in the seed money area and, if they own the real estate, in this area as well. The hospitals, health centers and agencies such as the Salvation Army might be called upon to operate health, food and social programs in the SRO.

#### New York City Funding

##### New York City Housing Authority

Aspects funded - seed money, real estate, construction, rent subsidy.

Eligibility and applicability to SRO's: Families, the aged (62 or older), the physically disabled.

The Housing Authority has standards of income and other qualifications for admission to its projects. Most of the problem SRO population would not satisfy these standards and would not fit in the "aged" or "disabled" category. Therefore, a Housing Authority project could serve only a small portion of the "problem SRO" population.

Types of units: Complete apartments, although the Housing Authority is considering the rehabilitation of a hotel on the West Side for "congregate living" for older people, which would have central cooking facilities and social service spaces.

Rentals: There are various Housing Authority financing programs. The portion of the project supported by the rentals and that portion supported by subsidy varies with each program. There is a state cash subsidy program, a city no cash subsidy program and some city subsidized programs. The rent levels are low in relation to the accommodations provided



and very low in relation to the housing available on the commercial market.

Financing: Financing is provided by state or city long term (up to 50 year) bonds.

#### New York City Municipal Loan Program

Aspects funded: Construction - rehabilitation of existing multiple dwellings erected before April 18, 1929.

Eligibility and applicability to SRO's: One of the provisions of the program provides for the conversion of SRO's to Class A (self-contained dwelling unit) housing. However, it is the conclusion of this study that an SRO resident should have a self-contained unit, so this provision is not restrictive. Even the two or five bedroom units sharing a kitchen facility might fit into this regulation. There are no restrictions on who might live in these units and the loans are made to private landlords, so the entire SRO population would be eligible. At least one project, the Admiral on West 80th Street, has been funded under this law and is nearing completion.

The Admiral includes some common facilities for the residents. First preference in renting the new units is given residents of the building displaced by the construction work. Thereafter, the city (Relocation and HDA) has a call on the apartments.

Rental Details: Rents are regulated by the office of Rent Control and must be adequate to liquidate the loan, operate the building and provide a profit to the owner.

Financing Details: A maximum of a 30 year mortgage is available with the amount to cover the cost of the renovation, subject to certain conditions. Some tax abatement may be granted.

#### Private Housing Finance Law (City "Mitchel-Lama")

This is covered in the next section under state financing.

#### Capital Budget

A possible approach to "seed money" and for real estate acquisition is to use city capital funds for this purpose. Proposals can be, and have been made to place such an item on the city Capital Budget.

#### New York State Funding

#### Private Housing Finance Law (Limited Profit Housing, Limited Dividend Housing, Redevelopment Companies Housing, State "Mitchel-Lama")

Aspects Funded: Real estate and construction.

Eligibility and applicability to SRO's: There would seem to be no problem in the law itself due to amendment 5467 dated February 17, 1969 which defines a dwelling as a "room or rooms with or without cooking facilities arranged



for occupancy as a self contained unit." The question would be one of interpretation of the law. Interviews with officials have indicated that it would be possible to finance an SRO using these methods.

Types of Units: The type of units designed for the Model SRO would probably be acceptable. The common facilities could also be covered in the mortgage.

Rental Details: Rents must support the carrying charges of the project.

Financing Details: The City or State Housing Finance Agency makes loans from the proceeds of bonds. The interest charges on the loans are the same as from the bonds. Under certain programs a loan of up to 100% is possible. Also total tax abatement may be granted under certain programs.

#### Private Housing Finance Law, Article II

Housing Development and Fund "Seed Money": Temporary non-interest bearing loans are made available to non-profit sponsors for options on real estate, professional fees and application fees. These loans are repayable at the mortgage closing. There are also technical and training services available.

#### New York State Capital Grant Low Rent Assistance Program

This program provides for the leasing of up to 100% of the apartments in a limited or

non-profit housing development and the subletting of these units to low income tenants who pay a rental of 20% of their income.

#### Mental Hygiene Law

Eligibility and applicability to SRO's: This law establishes "hostels" for the "mentally disabled." If the term "mentally disabled" is broadly interpreted, a portion of the "problem SRO" population which has problems of alcohol, drugs and mental illness, could be accommodated.

Aspects Funded: One third of the capital cost and one half of the operating funds. There has to be some other agency taking up the balance of the funding.

The other details of the law relating to types of units and rentals were not available at this time.

#### Federal Programs

Section 236, Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. This program provides payment to the mortgagee to reduce the payment on the project mortgage to an amount required for principal and a 1% to 1½% interest. The rentals are reduced accordingly.

FHA insured and state and locally sponsored non-profit projects would be eligible. This program could be combined with the Mitchell-Lama program to reduce rents.

Section 101 of the Housing and Urban Development





Act of 1965, rent supplements, provides payment to the owner (non or limited profit sponsor) to make up differences between fair market rent and rent based upon 25% of qualified tenants' income.



## 6. RESPONSE OF THE COMMUNITY

The ideas, designs, cost estimates and funding analysis reported on above were presented at meetings on October 9, November 17 and December 17 to community members, both residents of SRO's and others. Response to the general approach to the SRO resident and to the designs was favorable. The concept of each resident having a complete living unit or, at worst, sharing a bath with one person, was an appealing one to most. Also favorably received was the idea of a common lounge and recreational facility for the entire building rather than several smaller facilities located throughout the building.

Certain things were questioned, however. One persistent point was that any solution should recognize the variety of the SRO population and the differing needs represented. This leads to the principle that each SRO design should be aimed at specific types of population that it is intended to serve.

Another related point was made that the type and scope of service facilities located in the SRO might be reduced in certain SRO's since many residents do not need these services, and it was felt that decent housing was the primary requirement.

The subject of who was to be admitted to the new SRO's and how they were to be selected was raised several times. No satisfactory resolution of this question was reached, although it was agreed that the community should decide.

In general, the positive reception of the designs was coupled with a strong sense of skepticism at ever seeing them accomplished. The SRO resident and the surrounding community, aware of the difficulties of daily life in the SRO's, are equally aware of the difficulty of getting anything done about them especially in the area of construction. The meetings provided a sense of good wishes but very little hope.



## 7. PATH TO THE FIRST PROJECT

In spite of all the problems, there are indications that progress might be possible. There is a growing awareness of the needs and rights of the SRO population, both within the community and government. Either the community or government could initiate the first project.

A community approach would begin with an existing community group or one newly formed. Inclusion of SRO residents in this group and close coordination with them at every stage is essential. This group should take the following steps: (The order might vary slightly. If, for instance, a desirable site became available at once, the program might be shaped to fit it.)

### Preliminary Programming

A preliminary program should be written consisting of three parts. One would describe the operation of the Model SRO and the various service programs within it. Another would be a physical program outlining the number and type of spaces to perform these services. The third would be an analysis of financial feasibility. The next section of this report consists of such a program.

With this program or another written by them in hand, the community group should approach the government agencies involved such as the Department of Social Services and the Housing and Development Administration as well as

private institutions likely to give services such as the local hospitals. The purpose of this approach would be to gain preliminary approval of participation by the various agencies.

### Site Identification

Knowing the requirements of the program, a site would have to be identified and, if possible, tied up until seed money could be obtained. At this point, a procedure would have to be set up so that relocation could be accomplished with no one made homeless. One possibility would be to buy six buildings, empty one out as vacancies became available in the others and remodel that one first. The next one would be emptied into the remodeled building and the sequence repeated until all were remodeled.

### Seed Money

Seed money should be sought from the sources mentioned above for the following purposes: (At this point the professionals and the community people would have to be paid due to the extensive time involved.)

- Option on the site
- Writing the program in more detail
- Preliminary planning of the building
- Final financial feasibility determination in coordination with the funding agencies for land purchase, construction and operation
- Completing the applications for funding



## Funding Final Planning Construction and Operation

If the activities paid for by the seed money are accomplished successfully, the path toward funding, final planning, construction and operation is well started. Community group follow up is required to bring about the funding. When money starts to flow, a staff can be hired, construction can be performed and the building put into operation.

A government agency, a private institution or a private individual would have to follow many of these steps in bringing about a Model SRO, but the details might vary depending on the nature and regulations of the sponsor.





## 8. PROGRAM FOR THE MODEL SRO

This program, based on the new law tenement rehabilitation described above, is aimed at an SRO with a varied population and is divided into the three parts, operation, spaces required and feasibility.

### Operation

**Housing units:** The housing units will be operated by the sponsoring organization or community group in a manner regulated by the funding of these housing units. Rent levels will be set to conform to the regulations of the funding program.

**Staff required:** Daytime manager  
Live-in superintendant  
Maintenance helper

**Service programs:** The service programs, described in detail below, should be a coordinated effort involving residents, professional staff and outside professionals. Since some overlapping is involved, the consolidated staff and sponsorship is given independently of the programs.

### Programs:

1. **Training and self help:** Training and self help for the SRO residents should be carried on in connection with the food service program, the recreation program, and possibly the health services and building maintenance.

2. **Food service:** One hot meal per day should be provided for all residents desiring it on a prepaid basis. Meals should be available 3 times a day for all who want and can pay for them.
3. **Recreation:** A program centering around the lounge, but involving outside trips and other activities should be set up, run by the residents themselves.
4. **Health and counseling:** The services of a visiting nurse and possibly a doctor should be made available as well as advice as to how to use the health services offered outside the SRO. Counseling on dealing with public agencies, personal and vocational problems should be provided.
5. **Homemaker services:** There should be offered housekeeping assistance to those residents either temporarily or permanently unable to keep up their own dwelling units.

**Sponsorship:** Training, recreation, health counseling and homemaker service could be financed by the Department of Social Services and by private agencies or health institutions. The food service would be self supporting.

**Staff:** Social worker, full time  
Cook, full time  
Nurse, part time  
Doctor, part time  
Counselors, part time  
Homemaker staff - on an as needed basis  
SRO resident aides



### Spaces Required

These spaces form the rehabilitated new law tenement:

- 73 living units in one room, two room and five room combinations (one unit for superintendant)
- Medical office
- Infirmary
- Lounge
- TV lounge
- Lobby and desk - manager's office
- Dining room, kitchen and food storage
- Four counseling offices
- Laundry
- Maintenance and storage space

### Feasibility

These costs are middle 1969 costs. They probably should be increased by about 10% per year to account for inflation. Although the rent level will vary with the financing, a sample figure was chosen on the basis that the housing unit rent collected should cover the cost of these units.

Building income: 72 rental units  
Assume a rent level of \$1,000/year  
each (average) (\$83.38/month) \$72,000  
per year

The source of this rent is either from the Department of Social Services or from the resources of the residents themselves.

Building operating expense and debt service at 1½% - rental units	\$72,760 per year
Building operating expense and debt service at 1½% - common facilities	\$17,200 per year
Service program staff	
Social worker (full time)	\$10,000
Cook (full time) - food service self supporting	—
Nurse (part time)	5,000
Doctor (part time)	5,000
Counselors (part time)	10,000
SRC resident aides	<u>10,000</u>
	\$40,000
Overhead and other costs @ 50% of salaries	<u>20,000</u>
	\$60,000

The food service should be self supporting, either from Department of Social Service payments to the tenants or from their own resources. The homemaker service would be on an as needed basis, is difficult to estimate, and is omitted from the cost estimate.

Total costs	\$149,960
Income	<u>72,000</u>
Deficit- less than \$1,100 per person per year	\$ 77,960



If the \$1,100 per resident per year (plus the allowance for inflation) over the rental, food and homemaker assistance already provided can be made available through public or private funds, the program is feasible. This seems a small price to pay for the benefit involved for the residents and for society at large.



## 9. AN SRO HOUSING POLICY

The detailed formulation of an SRO Housing Policy involving changed and new legislation is outside the scope of this study and the expertise of its authors, but certain general comments can be made. The existing laws to provide various incentives and funding for housing construction do not recognize the needs of the SRO population. These laws are aimed at families, the aged and the mentally disabled and do not recognize the existence of the varied population of the SRO's with their differing social, physical and economic problems.

One approach would be to amend the present laws to include this population. Amendment 5467 to the Private Housing Finance Law permits the construction of a non-housekeeping unit without a bathroom under this law. This would seem to allow SRO construction under this law subject to interpretation by the administering agency. S.3712-B amends the Mental Hygiene Law with regard to setting up a hostel program for the "mentally disabled." The use of this type for the SRO population would depend on a favorable interpretation of the term "mentally disabled," and a setting up of specifications for the hostels to provide an appropriate SRO facility.

Full recognition must be given to two important factors. First, the costs of providing the housing, aided by all the conventional subsidies, such as low cost money, land writedown and tax

abatement, are not sufficient to lower the rents within the reach of the consumer. Other means of subsidy must be added. This problem is common to all low income housing at present. Second, the housing must provide more than mere accommodation. It must provide the services delineated above to make the housing really function for the SRO resident.

Another approach would be to set up new legislation aimed specifically at the SRO population expanded to include the heavy narcotics user, the homeless youth and all others now ineligible for public housing. This would allow the creation of a whole range of "problem oriented" housing types that would enlarge the concept of a decent home for everyone into an instrument of considerable therapeutic and social value.





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